

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the indicated sections of the specification as follows.

The paragraph on page 1 that immediately follows the title, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

A1 This application claims ~~priority from~~ the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/297001 filed June 8, 2001, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/315256, filed August 27, 2001.

The paragraph beginning at page 2, line 8, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

A2 The ~~present inventors have recognized the deficiencies and problems inherent in the~~ prior art have been recognized, and in response thereto ~~conducted~~ intensive research has been conducted to develop ~~in developing~~ innovative labial pads. ~~The inventors have~~ It has been discovered that situating at least one notch in the periphery of at least that portion of an absorbent article, such as a labial pad, to be located nearest the clitoris minimizes the likelihood that the absorbent article will come into irritating contact with the clitoris. ~~The inventors~~ It has also been discovered that situating at least one notch in the periphery of at least that portion of an absorbent article, such as a labial pad, to be located nearest the perineum minimizes the likelihood that the absorbent article will come into irritating contact with the perineum.

At page 3, after the paragraph that starts with the phrase "FIG. 6 ...", insert the following new paragraph:

A3 FIG. 6A is a cross-sectional view illustrating a version of the absorbent article having a cover which encloses the absorbent.

The paragraph beginning at page 9, line 5, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

A4
The absorbent (66) generally has a thickness, caliper or height (H), as illustrated at least in FIG. 5, measured along a line lying generally parallel to the z-axis, Z-Z. The minimum thickness of the absorbent (66) typically is no less than about 9; alternatively, no less than about 8; alternatively, no less than about 7; alternatively, no less than about 6; alternatively, no less than about 5; alternatively, no less than about 4; alternatively, no less than about 3; alternatively, no less than about 2; alternatively, no less than about 1; or alternatively, no less than about 0.5 mm. The maximum thickness of the absorbent (66) typically is no greater than about 2; alternatively, no greater than about 3; alternatively, no greater than about 4; alternatively, no greater than about 5; alternatively, no greater than about 6; alternatively, no greater than about 7; alternatively, no greater than about 8; alternatively, no greater than about 9; or alternatively, no greater than about 10 mm. Thus, the absorbent (66) may have a thickness of about 10 mm or less; although the approximate thickness of the absorbent may vary according to, *inter alia*, the general design and intended disposition of the absorbent article (40) within the vestibule (42) of a female wearer.

The paragraph beginning at page 10, line 3, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

A5
The absorbent (66) also desirably has a basis weight of less than about 600 grams per square meter (gsm). Stated differently, the absorbent (66) typically has a maximum basis weight of no greater than about 600; alternatively, no greater than about 500; alternatively, no greater than about 400; alternatively, no greater than about 300; alternatively, no greater than about 200; or alternatively, no greater than about 100 gsm. Generally, the absorbent (66) also has a minimum basis weight of typically no less than about 0.1; alternatively, no less than about 50; alternatively, no less than about 100; alternatively, no less than about 150; alternatively, no less than about 200; alternatively, no less than about 250; alternatively, no less than about 300; alternatively, no less than about 350; alternatively, no less than about 400; alternatively, no less than about 450; alternatively, no less than about 500; or alternatively, no less than about 550 gsm. Thus, the absorbent (66) may have a basis weight of about 600 gsm or less; although the approximate basis weight of the absorbent may vary according to, *inter alia*, the general design and intended disposition of the absorbent article (40) within the vestibule (42) of a female wearer. A specific example of a suitable absorbent would be similar to a coform material made of a blend of polypropylene and cellulose fibers and used in [[KOTEX®]] KOTEX maxi pantliners and obtainable from ~~Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Neenah, WI, USA.~~

The paragraph beginning at page 10, line 28, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

A6
The baffle (64) may be maintained in secured relation with the absorbent (66) by bonding all or a portion of the adjacent surfaces to one another. A variety of bonding methods known to one of skill in the art may be utilized to achieve any such secured relation. Examples of such methods include, but are not limited to, ultrasonics, thermal bonding, or the application of adhesives in a variety of patterns between the two adjoining surfaces. A specific example of a baffle material would be similar to a polyethylene film used on [[KOTEX®]] KOTEX pantliners and obtainable from Pliant Corporation, Schaumburg, IL, USA.

The paragraph beginning at page 11, line 7, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

A7
The cover (62) is provided for comfort and conformability and functions to direct bodily exudate(s) away from the body and toward the absorbent (66). The cover (62) should retain little or no liquid in its structure so that it provides a relatively comfortable and non-irritating surface next to the tissues within the vestibule (42) of a female wearer. The cover (62) can be constructed of any woven or nonwoven material which is also easily penetrated by bodily fluids contacting its surface. Examples of suitable materials include rayon, bonded carded webs of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene, nylon, or other heat-bondable fibers, polyolefins, such as copolymers of polypropylene and polyethylene, linear low-density polyethylene, aliphatic esters such as polylactic acid, finely perforated film webs and net material also work well. A specific example of a suitable cover material would be similar to a bonded carded web made of polypropylene and polyethylene used as a cover stock for [[KOTEX®]] KOTEX pantliners and obtainable from Sandler Corporation, Germany. Other examples of suitable materials are composite materials of a polymer and a nonwoven fabric material. The composite materials are typically in the form of integral sheets generally formed by the extrusion of a polymer onto a web of spunbond material. The fluid permeable cover (62) can also contain a plurality of apertures (not shown) formed therein which are intended to increase the rate at which bodily fluid(s) can penetrate into the absorbent (66).

The paragraph beginning at page 12, line 15, replace with the following, rewritten paragraph:

AS The cover (62) typically resides on the upper surface of the absorbent (66), but alternatively can surround and partially or entirely enclose the absorbent (e.g. FIG. 6A). Alternatively, the cover (62) and the baffle (64) can have peripheries which extend outward beyond the periphery of the absorbent (66) and can be peripherally joined together to form an edge (84), as illustrated at least in FIG. 6. Utilizing known techniques, such as, for example, gluing, crimping, hot-sealing or the like, the edge (84) may be formed either entirely, so that the entire periphery of the absorbent (66) is circumscribed by their joiner, or the cover (62) and the baffle (64) can be partially peripherally joined. To minimize the possibility of irritation and/or discomfort to the wearer of the absorbent article (40), it is desired that the edge (84) and at least the area of the absorbent article immediately adjacent the edge be soft, compressible and conformable. Desirably, any edge (84) so formed shall have a width no greater than about 10; alternatively, no greater than about 9; alternatively, no greater than about 8; alternatively, no greater than about 7; alternatively, no greater than about 6; alternatively, no greater than about 5; alternatively, no greater than about 4; alternatively, no greater than about 3; alternatively, no greater than about 2; or alternatively, no greater than about 1 mm. In addition, any edge (84) so formed shall desirably have a width of no less than about 0.5; alternatively, no less than about 1; alternatively, no less than about 2; alternatively, no less than about 3; alternatively, no less than about 4; alternatively, no less than about 5; alternatively, no less than about 6; alternatively, no less than about 7; alternatively, no less than about 8; or alternatively, no less than about 9 mm. Thus, any edge (84) so formed may have a width ranging from no less than about 0.5 mm up to no greater than about 10 mm; although the approximate width of any edge may vary according to, *inter alia*, the general design and intended disposition of the absorbent article (40) within the vestibule (42) of a female wearer. In other embodiments, the cover (62) and/or the baffle (64) can have a periphery that is coterminous with the periphery of the absorbent (66).

On page 23, replace the Abstract with the rewritten Abstract set forth on the following separate page: